

BACHELOR GIRL CHAT

SHE TALKS OF THE INCONSISTENT SEX.

"Aren't men inconsistent?" exclaimed the Bachelor Girl, as she slipped her painting apron over her shoulders and tied her arms into a butterfly knot in a vain attempt to button the apron up the back.

"Men!" The Mere Man looked his astonishment, but closed his lips with wise determination.

"Yes," said the Bachelor Girl, ignoring the infection, as she twisted herself serpentine fashion and desperately grasped the wrong button. "Did you read about that farmer who refused to marry a girl because she wore slippers?"

"Perhaps," suggested the Mere Man tolerantly, "it was the best excuse he could think of at the moment. Or perhaps," he added, thoughtfully studying the Bachelor Girl's dimpled forehead, "her elbows weren't as fascinating."

"Now, Mr. Porter!" The Bachelor Girl dropped her arms suddenly and gave up the attempt to fasten the apron.

"As he had hoped," finished the Mere Man with virtuous exaltation. "Couldn't I button it for you?" he added wistfully.

"Oh, probably," replied the Bachelor Girl sweetly, "you could, but you can't! It doesn't need to be buttoned," she added hastily, taking a seat before her easel and selecting a brush. "It wasn't her slippers that attracted him," she resumed with unruffled dignity. "It was what he called her 'immodesty.'"

And while he was denouncing her he probably stood there with his shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders and his collar rolled down at the throat, and the guilty consciousness that he had eaten dinner with his coat off, and owed his house rent, and underpaid his field hands, and beat his dog, and overworked his plow horses. It's always the men who are least particular about their own manners and morals that are most particular about the manners and morals of their wives. If Satan should come up here to search for a soul mate he probably would demand a paragon of all the virtues and a vision of beauty, instead of a commonplace little devil with hoofs and horns.

"And if St. Peter should come down here wife-hunting," retorted the Mere Man promptly, "he'd probably be taken by the first designing young thing who had her eye on the gatekeeper's lodge."

"And he'd like her all the better if she blonded her hair and possessed a few of the virtues with which to spice his monotonous existence," rejoined the Bachelor Girl, carefully drawing a pink line down the nose of a painted kitten. "All the worst women get the best husbands, and all the nice, noble women marry rakes."

she added, with a sigh.

"Oh, well," said the Mere Man cheerfully, setting himself back against the sofa pillows, "perhaps it's a provision of Providence to prevent us from becoming a race of angels and devils. In the long run, the virtues and vices get spread around equally, don't they, like the jam and the butter on the bread?"

"But it isn't fair," protested the Bachelor Girl, "and Providence has nothing to do with it. It's all the fault of man's inconsistency."

"What?"

"And his egotism. The less a man has to offer, the more he demands. The more liberties he permits himself, the fewer he permits women. And the funny part of it is that he generally gets just what he thinks he wants."

"Oh, that's easy," began the Mere Man confidently, "with the market so large and the demand so—"

"I beg your pardon?" The Bachelor Girl held her brush poised stiffly in midair.

"So—"

"Yes?" The atmosphere of the studio grew icy in spite of the fire in the grate.

"So—unsatisfactory," finished the Mere Man, carefully.

"It's always the man," continued the Bachelor Girl, resuming her painting, "who has the pug nose and the hollow chest and no legs or morals or style or income to speak of who goes about criticizing and picking and choosing among women, as if he were a Croesus and an Adonis and a Solomon all rolled into one. It's always the little fellow with the red-tipped forefinger and the tailor-made figure and the cigarette-stained fingers who rails against the stupidity and the artificiality and the bad manner of the modern woman and laments his inability to find a high-souled affinity. It's always the man with a past as lurid as a billboard and a record of broken hearts and broken engagements miles long who is looking for a girl who never has been kissed, when it comes to matrimony. It's always the man who has been most careless about his own record who is most careful about his wife's reputation."

"Perhaps," agreed the Mere Man cheerfully, "but isn't it natural of him to be careful? A chap can have only one wife at a time, you know, and divorces are expensive. When you've got only one guess you're liable to take a long time before you hazard it. Selecting a wife is like buying a house; you can't get your money or your freedom back once you have signed the papers. You want to be awfully sure beforehand that you are getting something that will show up well and give you solid comfort and do you credit, and not prove too great an expense, and be in need of paint and repairs; something sunny and warm and cheerful and adaptable and equipped with all the substantial qualities and all the graces; something that will impress your neighbors and be the envy of your friends and—"

"And then," cried the Bachelor Girl, waving her brush with exasperation, "you want to get it all for half-price or for nothing! I've noticed," she continued, with a withering glance at the Mere Man, "that the people who haven't any money always expect the most for it. The people who don't pay their board bills are the ones who are always looking for the best rooms and complaining about the service. The men who have a right to demand all the things you name are too generous to ask them. It's the small men who demand big bargains in wives. The big men just go into the matrimonial market as they would into a shop, and pick out the first thing that attracts their eyes, and say 'Give me that!' while the petty little dudes and cross-grained old bachelors are overhauling the stock and damaging the goods, trying to find something without a flaw."

"Well," began the Mere Man, indifferently, "if it makes them happy—"

"But it doesn't make them happy," interrupted the Bachelor Girl, vehemently. "If a man with ordinary looks and virtues would be satisfied with value received in the matter of a wife, he wouldn't get marital indignation trying to assimilate something too rich for him. What does a man do with an idea about golf and his dinner with a woman of ideals and intellect? He would be much happier with a commonplace little thing, who could appreciate his appetite for pie and talk about caddies and the weather. What does a man want with a saint? He would be much more comfortable with a nice little hoof-and-horn devil, who could join in his sports and appreciate his stories and wink at his indiscretions and back him in his enterprises. What does a wrinkled old monkey want

with it unfastened?" exclaimed the Mere Man, in astonishment.

"I thought I'd like to get—to give you the sensation," said the Bachelor Girl, hurriedly bending over her easel.

"But you were angry when I suggested it."

"Yes," The Bachelor Girl bent closer to the easel.

"And you would have been angrier if I hadn't suggested it again?"

"Yes," The Bachelor Girl's voice was a whisper and her cheeks like a rose.

"Aren't women consistent?" murmured the Mere Man, as he sat down again and gazed into the fire with a thoughtful expression.

SOME LITTLE FADES.

A chie little finish to the street costume in narrow black cravat ribbon giving in front in long jewel-tipped ends.

Long mousquetaire sleeves of wrinkled lace or chiffon, closely outlining the arm from shoulder to well over the hand are endorsed by smartly dressed women.

"Madam Butterfly" costumes, combining a directoire coat with mandarin collar and a sort of "dainty ruffles" skirt, are popular with the young element just now.

Really a cunning and becoming little article is the new leather automobile bonnet, shaped something like a milkmaid's pretty bonnet. Though leather, it is made in any color the wearer's own complexion, has coquettish strings, and is quite impervious to rain or wind.

Gowns must so clearly define the figure that underwear must be reduced to the finest point possible, and to answer this need there are combination garments of elastic jersey material that take up no room at all, and are daintily finished with lace trills. Princess bloomers of saten, mohair, satin, or silk, are prime conveniences for the street, to take the place of petticoats.

SPINSTERS' PARADE.

For fourteen months Plainfield, Ind., has had no weddings, and the marriageable women are greatly disturbed. To stir the many hearts of Plainfield men to beat in unison, 100 of the girls, clad in old maid costumes of years ago, paraded the streets the other evening. All of them carried banners. These are a few of the inscriptions:

"I'll sew your buttons on."

"I once was young."

"I've got my eyes on you."

"Let me darn your socks."

"Ask papa."

"This is so sudden."

One sweet young thing stalked haughtily apart from her companions, carrying a banner with this legend:

"I don't belong with that gang."

BAD EFFECT UPON HAIR.

Our method of heating our homes and business places, of dressing the hair, of wearing heavy hats, and the climate, have a bad effect upon the hair. Like plants, the hair must be nourished from the roots, and when the oil glands do not work busily artificial aid must be resorted to. Pure vaseline, preferably red, rubbed into the scalp often enough to prevent dryness of the hair, will work wonders in the line of stimulation of the hair roots. Some women use it liberally the night before a shampoo, and that is something to be proud of.

What do you want, Mr. Porter?" asked the Bachelor Girl, coldly.

"A chance to button that apron."

"How foolish!" began the Bachelor Girl, smiling.

"I never buttoned—anybody—up the back," sighed the Mere Man.

"How foolish of you—"

"And I'd like to experience the sensation of having you button me up."

"How foolish of you to wish for what you have had—"

"What?"

"For the last half hour."

"Tell me," said the Mere Man, with delicious excitement, as he finished the last button, "how you do it when I'm—when nobody's here?"

The Bachelor Girl calmly slipped the apron over her head and then dropped it back on her shoulders again—without undoing a button!

"And yet you sat there all that time with it unfastened?"

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BRIDES HALT GIFTS

Many Now Are Declining to Receive Presents.

CUSTOM IS FAST DYING OUT

Indiscriminate Offerings Become Unpopular Through the Frequent Reminders of Distant Acquaintances.

Independent Folk Limit Invitations, Incorporating Objective.

The indiscriminate giving of wedding presents appears to be doomed.

To a city like New York more than any other addicted to the promiscuous sending of costly bridal gifts to persons often not even known by sight, there is something straining at a wedding invitation which warns its recipient that gifts will not be received, but when a number of such bits of postcard drifted into all the social corners of Greater New York there went up a universal sigh of relief.

Universal, that is, if one may except those newly wedded people who have looked forward to the enjoyable excitement of opening innumerable boxes in delightful uncertainty as to whether their contents would disclose a piece of cut glass, a gold enameled jeweled cabinet box, another set of spoons, the tenth favorite vase, or the fifteenth clock.

These are the persons who if they did not inscribe upon their wedding invitations "Do not come without a gift," implied it. Too well they know that persons who send gifts to them should or should not send gifts to them in future, be likely to err on the side of the new idea and not send them. One of last year's brides received from a wealthy but almost unknown acquaintance a box of superb roses on her wedding day.

The flowers cost more than a stereotyped gift would have done, but this is a method that some people are employing now to show their disapproval of the habit of sending gifts indiscriminately, while conforming to the custom in a manner which could not give offense.

Many have felt that the burden of gift buying has grown beyond all reasonable proportions and has even become a serious vexation to those who feel compelled personally to select the gifts and cannot give the necessary time without adding to business cares, and often involving business losses.

Men especially are somewhat helpless when confronted by the continual necessity of purchasing presents for those about to marry. Officials in a certain corporation have solved this difficulty by depending upon a woman employee to make their purchases for them. Her judgment in the matter of selection is so good that her office work is seriously interfered with by the demands made upon her time in this respect.

Men who have no one to shop for them in whose taste and judgment they can place any dependence are wont to order gifts by telephone or mail. This is so generally done, and the articles which can be so ordered belong to such a limited class that herein lies an explanation of forty checks received by one couple recently, and the quantities of duplicate articles belonging to this class of wedding presents which are sent to every bride.

Besides the tax upon time, patience, and purse imposed by the practice of indiscriminate giving, many families have grown to dislike being placed under obligations to persons with whom they did not have, and did not wish to have, more than a slight acquaintance. Men could hardly ignore at clubs, in business transactions, and elsewhere others who had presented members of their families with costly gifts.

Then, too, many a young man at the outset of married life found himself hampered by the necessity of extending a hospitality which he could not afford or of making reciprocal presents to those who had so honored him upon the occasion of his marriage.

Verbal and engraved notices not to send gifts to brides are serving as an enticement to break up this habit, which many think has become an actual nuisance.

Hitherto such has been the unwritten law on this subject that many guests felt they could not present themselves at a home wedding ceremony or reception unless they had first guaranteed a welcome by sending the expected present.

Another thing which has caused the custom to be looked upon with disfavor is the change which has gradually taken place in the class and number of guests invited to a wedding. Formerly relatives, friends, and more or less intimate acquaintances composed the lists of guests. Later it became the rule to extend the courtesy of an invitation to those likely to become of future social service to the bride or of business benefit to the bridegroom, as well as to persons slightly known by the bride's family and to whom it was desired to show an attention which would not necessarily imply a wish for closer acquaintance.

This extension of wedding courtesies soon made marriage ceremonies a burden in many ways. Room had to be provided in churches and houses for many hundreds of persons; the issuing of invitations became a serious vexation, for it proved difficult not to offend some by an omission regarded by them as a slight, however unintentional it might have been. To escape this and the other excruciations of a modern wedding, many a so-called "secret marriage" and "elopement" have taken place—amiable arranged in family council beforehand.

The receipt of duplicate presents of course makes it easier to bestow some of the duplicates upon others embarking upon a "double life," but two recent couples have been in a quandary as to which of a score or more of chafing dishes to keep, which to exchange, and which to pass on to some other young couple. The same problem, in even more magnified form, was presented to them together with a supply of clocks sufficient to stock a fair sized shop.

Silversmiths have resorted to exchange duplicated wedding presents for other articles more desirable, and there is usually no difficulty whatever in the transaction except when gifts are carried to houses whose owners conspicuously appear on the boxes which contain them and the mortified bride learns that only the box has been furnished by that establishment, and the contents purchased from a much less fashionable and expensive firm.

One might say it serves people right to be mortified in the act of bartering away a gift, but what are young householders to do with some twenty dozen spoons or forks? Or where—in a New York apartment house—could they be found for half a score of cut glass punch bowls? Spoons always suggest themselves as appropriate presents for young couples, and the festive punch bowl invariably follows the troops, as it were. Few remember that the spoons and punch bowls of this season's weddings, while prolific of silver, have been less so in cut glass and especially opulent in the matter of chafing dishes.

A prominent silversmith is authority for the statement that it has become the

custom to give useful rather than purely ornamental gifts, which is the first intimation of such a source that the giving of bridal presents is being confined to those relatives and close friends who may properly contribute such things.

The habit of exhibiting gifts with the cards of —givers conspicuously attached has practically ceased. It gave rise to much heartburning and often real humiliation at such a comparison of the values of friendly offerings that people felt more than ever obliged to increase the costliness of those in order that they might the better stand this test of public appraisal. The wounding of old friends and estrangement of new ones by placing their inexpensive gifts beside those of more opulent acquaintances at last caused families to omit the cards of donors such exhibitions and, more recently, to admit only intimate friends and relatives to look at the bridal gifts, which, in many cases are not shown at all.

FROM WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

There must be easier lives than those of social teachers if one is to judge by the confessions of pupils. For two hours I was a listener to the confidences exchanged by two grown girls occupying the seat behind me in a railway car, and had difficulty in refraining from turning round and asking the pair if they had decent homes and mothers.

I would have heard every word had I been three seats ahead instead of one, for the voices were truly American, sharp and penetrating, and the girls did not care who heard them because they believed their behavior smart and expected approval, and they sat there in cold blood and told of the many ways they found to irritate their teachers, their pert replies to questions, and their open defiance of rules. I think I realized most completely the mastery children have been allowed to secure over their elders, and the discovery was not pleasant.

It is little wonder that good teachers are scarce. The salaries are not alluring and the men and women who are expected to educate children are not permitted to govern them. Pupils learn just what they please and in whatever manner they please, and then they can tell a car full of curious men and women the sorry tale of annoyance that reached my ears. We need not wonder that girls run away from good homes or that boys become rowdies or worse, for the laxity of parental government is sufficient to do any amount of spoiling.

There have been millionaires who sent girls to first-class finishing schools and then sought to buy easy rules for them. Sometimes the thing was possible and sometimes the head of the establishment had a pride in the reputation of the school and its high standard and the petted daughter had a choice between absolute obedience at school and a queenship at home. There are several students in colleges who do no more studying than is necessary to keep a footing in the institution; they are spoiled sons of wealthy parents, and although they help to support colleges they are no credit to them as students.

Only those who have taught school have a fair conception of the hard work, the monotonous work of pulling dull pupils up to the level of bright ones. There is no holding back of particularly clever ones nowadays, but there must be uniformity in class work and any wilfulness that increases the difficulty of maintaining it should be severely punished. But right here is a stumbling block—children will not be punished, and parents back them up in their rebellious attitude, so how can a teacher's life be anything but hard and wearing? Is it any wonder that she is too tired to think of anything but locked back teeth to shed, come on in and out of the schoolroom? The hours are short? Yes, they are, and the working week is but five days long. Also, there are vacations scattered through the year, and these make the life bearable, I presume. I would rather work that I liked.

BETTY BRADEN.

Any sort of a degree with "doctor" anywhere in it is likely to pile up trouble for the man who possesses it. They tell a story on Dr. George Horton, our congressman.

Baby Only a Poodle.

Talking about teeth, reminds me that I found my dentist in anything but the best of tempers day before yesterday. A stout lady—there's always something so touching to me in a stout woman's child-like faith in the endurance of corset laces. It makes me sure that the world isn't altogether cynical and unbelieving. There must have been a pressure of 200 pounds to every linear silk inch on that woman and yet she was perfectly secure in her confidence that nothing would give way. A stout lady, as I began to say, was just leaving the office and, under my ears, she declared the dentist slammed the door after her.

"She came in here a week ago and made an appointment," she said. "She told me 'hallo' and I began to scowling, and she hoped I'd be as gentle as I could be with him because he was so sensitive. I gave her the appointment and I got a Teddy bear to divert baby, because I'm interested in children's teeth. She came in to-day with baby. Baby was a beautiful little three-quarters breed poodle. Ever notice the affinity between fat women and under-sized dogs? Never saw a thin woman in my life that cared for anything small, or that was spoiled, or that was Baby's teeth, and I charged her enough to buy seven dogs like him. She said I was so gentle that Baby took to me from the first. And if you've got any under-sized dogs to shed, come on in and I'll blast them out for you."

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WOMAN ABOUT TOWN

SOME GOSSIP FOR HOLIDAY READERS.

Sweet Julia does not speak to Bea. And this is why and wherefore: They too as partners played at bridge, and Julia played ill; therefore, "Pythagoras had you in mind," Bea snapped, the cards before 'em. "I know just what he meant, now, when he said, 'Pans adumbrum.'"

Spoiled Pastor's Honeymoon.

"I'm going to take home with me a present that the guild I belong to has subscribed to for our rector's Christmas gift," said a West Virginia girl who has been visiting here. "I'm going to have it wrapped up so that he'll know what it is the instant he sees the package. I'm not going to take any chances this year because last year my fine Italian hand wrote 'Ichabod' or something worse over that poor man's honeymoon. He was engaged to our Sunday school teacher, and we all loved her devotedly. She was a widow who hadn't lived in our town very long, but we felt that she was just the person for the rector, and she had the prettiest teeth I ever saw in my life. The wedding was set for two days before Christmas, and the day before the event we girls invited her to a linen shower at my house. I got it up, and I wasn't content to express our devotion only in wear-out-able things like doilies and center-pieces. No, three. I was too original for that. We bought her a seal ring and had her monogram cut in it and the date and everything inside. We wanted to surprise her, so I had the happy thought of stirring the thing into a cake. We marked the spot where the ring was, and when I cut the cake I gave her the lovely little gift with a wall of cake and icing all around it. Maybe she was a little nervous. I know I'd be if I were getting married for a second time, even to a rector. She bit right into the cake and it was the most ghastly thing you ever saw. She didn't smile again till she got back from her honeymoon, and had things to smile with. Two of those lovely front teeth were the near-ear nailed in kind, and the seal ring broke them off. I guess she's forgiven me, but I'm going to have the rector's loving cup nailed up in a box. I wouldn't have him gnash his teeth on it for the world."

Those Dear Women.

Felicia took me to a meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society of her church the other day, and I really didn't think Felicia had it in her to say what she said about another church woman and a fellow-Ladies' Aider. The society was discussing ways and means, and somebody asked what Mrs. Dash had given to the cause. Mrs. Dash is fairly congested with money, so to speak, and it's a chronic congestion that politics in the form of calls for charity don't relieve. "Tight wad, I believe," is the vulgar term for Mrs. Dash's condition. The lady on our right rose up and said:

"Mrs. Dash tells me that she has given \$20 to the fund."

And as she sank into her seat she murmured to Felicia:

"She told me so. I believe her, but I haven't seen the money."

"I have," Felicia called across back. "She gave it to me. I've seen it, but I don't believe her."

The Last Straw.

"Cousin Althea has been visiting Bob and me for three months," says a young matron, "and if I didn't know for sure that she's going to spend Christmas with her son in Iowa I'm not at all sure I shouldn't chuck her headless body down the dumb waiter. She has our interests at heart, but that's the only place where she has anything at all. Cousin Althea's head is as empty as a letter of condolence. We've been out of a cook ever since my faithful Georgiana went away because she couldn't and wouldn't stand Cousin Althea's asking on Friday what had become of the three preserved figs left after luncheon on Wednesday—that was the final straw—and I've scoured the town for a successor to Georgiana. Last Friday I went to take some sewing to an old colored woman on Capitol Hill, and there I found the seamstress' granddaughter, just in from Warren, a strong, friendly, capable looking girl, wanting a place with a small family."

"If you don't want her, there's another lady that does," her grandmother told me. She wants to get settled right away."

"Of course I grabbed her off, and sent her to my sis where I went shopping in great calm of spirit."

"Miss Althea will show you where to begin," I told her.

"Long about 6 o'clock, I got home. Cousin Althea was in the kitchen wrestling with the cat. I went in and complained about the janitor's impertinence."

"But where's the cat I sent?" I said. "She said she'd be here by 4."

Cousin Althea turned around and stared at me.

"Didn't you know better than to hire a cook on Friday?" she said. "When you've kept house as long as I have you'll know more. I never in my life hired a girl on Friday that she didn't break every dish I had. You're flying in the face of Providence, that's what you're doing, with all that cut glass and Royal Dresden on your shelves. Friday cook stops, everything drops."

"Oh, yes, Cousin Althea's going. If she doesn't go, she'll be a very fortunate turkey-red son of a gun. I don't want to get off with 'brash.' If she allowed people to kiss him, whatever their recollections of their sires, but I did tell her I had a fever blister last July and didn't care to expose her offerings to any risks. I dare say dozens of visitors have kissed him since then. There ought to be a law against kissing babies, but as long as they are fairly plentiful, and Congress so busy, I don't suppose any lawmaker will introduce a bill to that end."

LOOSE DRAPERIES.

Loose draperies are especially helpful in making up little gowns and offer exceptional facilities for bringing out handsome dresses that are out of date and remodeling them in line with present modes. Double tunics and trimmings that produce such effects are very popular with the well dressed, and they may be worn by the woman inclined toward ebullience, if the style is combined with long straight lines in the front breadth or in some other way; but as a rule the double line is best adapted to slender girlish figures.

Clipping Man's Funny Mistake.